

NARRATIVE BIO: DARLENE R. MAY, PH. D.

A native of Akron, Ohio, Dr. May attended the College of Wooster as a National Merit Scholar majoring in Spanish and graduated from Indiana University (Bloomington) Summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. in Linguistics with minors in Spanish and French. She continued her studies with a Degree of Specialization in Linguistics and Hispano-American Dialectology from the Instituto Caro y Cuervo in Bogota, Colombia; an M.A. in Arabic Language and Literature as a Ford Foundation Asian Studies Fellow at Indiana University; one year as a CASA Fellow at the Center for Arabic Study Abroad at the American University in Cairo (Egypt); a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from Indiana University; and a certificate in Quranic Recitation for one year of study at the Al-Azhar University Quran Institute in Cairo, Egypt.

Dr. May spent ten years at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, as first Assistant then Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Islamic Studies as well as Chair of the Arabic Department. There, in 1979, she was the first woman in the history of the College to deliver the Opening Convocation address. She spent the following six years with her husband, who is a native of Egypt, residing in Cairo, where their two sons were born. Since returning to the U. S. in 1988 Darlene and her family lived four years on the outskirts of New York City and nine years in the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts before moving to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in 2001. Since settling in Winston-Salem she has taught Spanish in the Middle School at Forsyth Country Day School, tutored student-athletes at Wake Forest University in Spanish and French, and served as Adjunct Associate Professor of Arabic at both Wake Forest University and Elon University. She is currently Senior Lecturer of Arabic in the Department of Religion at Wake Forest and Faculty Advisor for the Wake Forest Muslim Students' Association. She will be directing the University's 7-week Summer Study Abroad program for the study of Arabic and Islam in Fez, Morocco, for the third time this coming summer.

Dr. May's professional activities over the years include having served on the Executive Board of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic and co-authoring the *Arabic Proficiency Test, for College Level* and its accompanying *Manual*. She has also done research and published articles in the areas of Arabic linguistics, women in Islam, and the legal status of non-Muslim communities in Muslim societies in addition to having lectured widely on the fundamentals of Islam, women and marriage in Islam, and Sufism. In 2012 she served as contributing editor for the *Wake Forest Journal of Law and Policy* for its issue on same-sex marriage in Islamic Law. Last year she had the honor of joining the North Carolina Humanities Council's Teachers' Institute faculty for the summer program *Muslim Journeys: Islam and its Many Roads*, for which she provided seminars on (1) the role of sacred language and sacred art in the Islamic tradition, (2) the importance of sacred journeys in the Islamic tradition, and (3) the journeys of non-Muslims into Islam, i.e., conversions through either Shari'ah or Sufism.

Dr. May has also been heavily involved in community outreach throughout her career, particularly in the areas of service to the local Muslim community and interfaith and

Christian-Muslim relations. She currently serves as Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors for the Winston-Salem Community Mosque Academy, Secretary of the Governing Council for the Winston-Salem Community Mosque, and Vice-Chair of the Board of Guidance for Interfaith Winston-Salem. She is a founding member of Compassionate Winston-Salem, frequently presents instructional programs for the Muslim inmates at Alexander Correctional Facility, and has helped the Winston-Salem Habit for Humanity chapter with house builds in Santa Ana, El Salvador. She is delighted to now have the opportunity to spend five Thursday evenings with you in conversation about Muslim Journeys in America.